

BLACK LESBIAN NEWSLETTER

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Special Thanks

Paula Ross

Donations

We now have non-profit status through the sponsorship of the San Francisco Women's Centers. Therefore all donations are tax deductible. Checks should be made out to the San Francisco Women's Centers/Black Lesbian Newsletter in order to benefit from this status.

OUTLETS

Modern Times Bookstore
968 Valencia
San Francisco, CA 94110
(415) 282-9246

Options for Women Over 40
San Francisco Women's Building
3543 18th Street/Valencia
San Francisco, CA 94110
(415) 431-6405

The Old Mole
1942 University Avenue
Berkeley, CA 94704
(415) 540-6077

A Woman's Place
4015 Broadway
Oakland, CA 94609
(415) 547-9920

Old Wives Tales
1009 Valencia
San Francisco, CA 94110
(415) 821-4679

Laughing Goddess Grotto
4118 Telegraph Avenue
Oakland, CA 94609
(415) 653-4169

Amelia's
647 Valencia
San Francisco, CA 94110
(415) 552-7788

P. O. Plus
584 Castro Street
San Francisco, CA 94114

Walt Whitman Bookshop
2319 Market Street
San Francisco, CA
(415) 861-3078

Garbo's (Marie Chavez)
696 Valencia
San Francisco, CA 94110
(415) 621-3600

Cover design by Sarita Johnson

ENCOUNTER

at

OLLIE'S

Wednesday evening Nov. 10th, I invited some friends to Ollie's to play Bingo. I had also gone to Ollie's to find out about signing a contract for a BLN New Year's party in Radcliffe Hall. We were informed by the bouncer that Ollie was not there.

At the bingo intermission, a group of us (six black women) decided to go into the bar to play a video game. As we walked in the bar, two white women preceded us. The bouncer asked our group, not the two white women, "Do you have your ID's?" We told her we did and proceeded into the other room.

My friends started playing the video game, and I watched. I turned my head when I heard the bouncer speaking rudely to one of my friends. The bouncer said to her, "I don't like your attitude. Do you have an ID?" The bouncer repeated "say yes, do you have your ID?" In an attempt to diffuse the hostility directed at my friend, I gestured for all of us in the group to answer the question. We all said "yes" simultaneously. The bouncer got more hostile and in a very demeaning way demanded, "I want the truth, I want the truth!" At this point, I said "What do you want from us? We said we have our ID's. You want us to swear on a f----- Bible?" The bouncer started hollering at me "Get out of here, get out of here--you're barred from here for one week!" My response was, "Why not make it a lifetime?" She told me she was going to call the police. The bartender walked over to us and I asked both of them to call Ollie, because she knew me and I thought she might add some reason to the situation. Although the bartender also knows me, she did not attempt to stop the bouncer

from calling the police. The bartender explained that ID's were required in order to protect their license and that they have had problems with people threatening them with knives and guns. I asked her if she thought we were guilty of carrying knives and guns. Her response was "no." At this point, I decided it was fruitless to remain where we were not wanted, so we all walked outside together.

We stopped out on the sidewalk and were met by another member of our Bingo party, who insisted that we go back in, but we all agreed it was important to do something then. So we went in the bar, and looked around for the bouncer. When we didn't see her, we approached the bartender and asked her again to call Ollie, so that we could get this mess straight. The bartender did call Ollie. We were told that Ollie could not come down at this time. She told the bartender to tell us that everyone was required to show ID's. (NOTE: At no time were any of us asked to actually show our identification). At this point, I was told that there were two police cars out front.

We went to speak to the bouncer and one of us said to her that we would like to go over what had just happened. The woman who had initially been singled out and badgered by the bouncer spoke first. She explained she had eaten dinner in the bar prior to the whole incident and therefore thought the bouncer was joking when she had asked her if she had an ID. Then the bouncer spoke and said she had approached the woman in a pleasant way and only wanted to know if she had an ID.

cont'd pg.4



A Celebration of Women's Voices
Swingshift
Danica
Alternative Measures
The San Francisco Lesbian Chorus

FRIDAY, DEC. 17th
8PM

MCKENNA THEATER
San Francisco State University
\$6 & \$5

For Information:
SF: 285-0572
EB: 548-6263

Encounter cont'd

At this point I disagreed with the way she had described her manner of approaching my friend. She accused me of "running off at the mouth" during the incident. One of the women asked her, "But why did you call the police?" The bouncer said I had not treated her in a "respectful" way. Another woman questioned her "What do you mean--not treating you in a respectful way?" The question was asked of the bouncer "Do you mean she wasn't docile enough?" One person told her that she had jeopardized our futures and our lives by calling the O.P.D. The bouncer denied that that could possibly be true. During the course of our conversation with the bouncer as we attempted to talk with her, she got more defensive and tried to avoid answering our questions. She deteriorated to the point of saying "You're trying to make a race thing out of this because I have blond hair and blue eyes." Nothing was going to be gained from anymore discussion, and certainly no apology was forthcoming, so we left. When we walked out onto the street, a police car pulled up and shined its spotlight on our group. At this point, we went our separate ways.

As a result of this incident, the Women's East Bay Building Bingo games have been permanently cancelled at Ollie's. WEBB has issued a statement condemning what happened that night and expressing their full support of all women of colour. The WEBB statement has been submitted to Plexus and Coming Up

Anaylsis

It must be understood that the bouncer and bartender, whoever they might be, represent the management of Ollie's and what that management stands for. In other words, how they want people to be treated.

In this account, I made an attempt to give a detailed outline of what happened that night, because this same type of harassment has happened many times before to women of colour at Ollie's, and it has never been documented.

In the gay community, we are often too reticent to call an incident that is clearly racist exactly that. We are making no bones about it here and now!

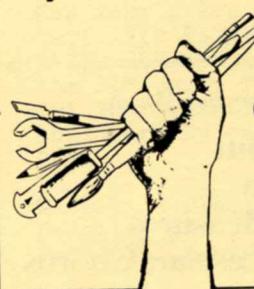
The bouncer who felt she was justified in demeaning black women was racist.

The bartender who had two years seniority and did nothing to stop the bouncer's irrational behavior in calling the police was racist.

The management of the bar who did not deem the situation important enough to come and mediate was racist. And finally, the other clientele of the bar who were not concerned about the harassment of six black women in their midst were racist.

c 1982 Marlene Bonner

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Brochures • Books**

FAREWELL

We at the BLN bid a fond farewell to Vivienne Walker-Crawford, BLN founder, editor and guiding light.

Vivienne's publishing and editorial acumen was invaluable during BLN's inception and infancy. Her presence generated confidence and enthusiasm in those hectic early days. Not only will we miss her talents and varied expertise, BLN will miss her generosity in sharing these gifts. We wish her good luck in all her future endeavors.



Our Demands

We demand:

1. The bouncer be fired immediately.
2. A public apology from the management and involved employees. This will take the form of
 - a) an apology to appear in Ollie's next month's events calendar.
 - b) an apology to appear in Plexus and Coming Up.
 - c) a full-page apology ad in the Feb. issue of the ELN.
3. That all who come into Ollie's be treated equally, in other words, all must show ID's or none must be asked to show ID's.
4. All current and future employees of Ollie's be informed that racist treatment of any patrons of Ollie's will not be tolerated.
5. All current and future employees of Ollie's be taught how to determine when calling the O.P.D. is and isn't necessary.
6. A larger percentage of juke box music reflect the taste of women of color. It is clear to us that one subtle ploy to discourage us from patronizing bars like Ollie's is the lack of music we feel comfortable listening and dancing to.

As we go to press, a mediation meeting with Ollie and some of the black women involved in this incident is planned. During that meeting, we will present our list of demands to her.

Update

A meeting between Ollie and four of us whose lives were jeopardized in her bar on 11 November, was held on 17 November at the Pacific Center in Berkeley. The following account is as detailed as space allows.

The racism exhibited by the bouncer and the bartender on 11 November was repeated by Ollie herself throughout the meeting. Her racism was demonstrated by the fact that she

1. Attempted to diffuse our anger and deflect our outrage by constantly dropping the names of other black women she knows. We failed to see the point of this.

2. She blamed us for not supporting the black woman D-J who works at the bar. She then pretended surprise when we told her it was her bar we didn't support because of its history of racist treatment of women of colour.

3. She tried to shift responsibility for her bar policies onto her employees. Employees do not set policies, they carry them out. By Ollie's own admission, the bartender on duty that night was her senior staff person, the bouncer working under her. At no time did the bartender exercise her legitimate authority over the bouncer whose responsibilities DO NOT include calling the police. That is the bartender's job. The bouncer's job, according to Ollie, is to stay with any trouble that might arise.

4. Ollie freely acknowledged that the bar's policy concerning the police is that if the bar wants to keep the customer(s), no cops. Otherwise, call in the O.P.D.

5. Further, Ollie told us that we (black women), are her "best customers" because (are you ready for this?), we dress so nicely and behave well. If we rate the Oakland police, what do her less than "best customers" get?

Ollie said she fired the bouncer on the Monday after the incident. That's not enough. We insist that all our demands be met. Ollie has agreed to that. If she doesn't keep her word (she told us we'd be able to see the changes. Yes, we will see, one way or another.), we intend to organize a boycott of the bar and all its facilities by women of colour and their supporters.

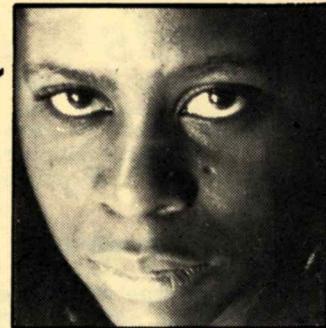
What happened on 11 November was nothing new. We've all been there before. Racism is as thick in the Bay Area as it is every place else. What is different is that we didn't just shut up and let this one slide by. It's time we let people know we won't keep quiet anymore when we are the targets of racist behaviour. For sure we don't have to pay money for such treatment. We can find it for free any day.

The ELN will continue to keep you informed about this and other similar occurrences. Please help by letting us know about these kinds of incidents. We can stop them if we stick together.

CounterVision

a photojournal on cultural diversity in the community of women.

is seeking photography,
writing and subscribers.
Our deadline for work is
Jan. 15, 1983.



For more information contact:
Diana Duff, 3021 Rawson, Oakland, 94619
(415) 430-8030

In CounterVision we hope to include family histories; racial, class and geographic influences; exploring situations which alienate or incorporate us into cultural subgroups and other characteristics which make us each unique.

Announcements

December 11

Demonstration called by the Concerned Parents of South Oroville. In Oroville for transportation and more information call 821-6545.

December 17

Avotcja and Terry Garthwaite at Valencia Rose - 766 Valencia St., SF - 9pm \$4 552-1445

December 18

Avotcja and Terry Garthwaite at Gertie's 250 Sebastopol Rd., Santa Rosa - 9pm \$4-6. (707) 527-0485 - Women Only

December 31

The Black Lesbian Newsletter is having a New Year's Eve party at the Pacific Center, 2712 Telegraph Ave, Berkeley, CA (415) 548-8283. For further details see the BLN party flyers distributed throughout the community - wheelchair accessible childcare by reservation - \$5-7 - 540-0671

Midgett's Place

December 10

Pandoura, poetess, 8pm \$3-5 - 864-0876

December 17

Rap Group, Topic: Loneliness During the Holidays - 8pm \$1

December 25

Christmas potluck 2-7pm. Dinner at 3:30.

There will be no January issue of the Black Lesbian Newsletter. The next issue will be in February 1983. Look for our rebirth in February--you'll be surprised!

Attention Writers

The Black Lesbian Newsletter needs short stories, interesting articles, short dramatic pieces, or other creative writing you feel would fit the format of this publication. Let's hear from you.

Deadlines for Announcements

Jan. 12 for Feb. issue

Feb. 10 for Mar. issue

(415) 540-0671

Submissions

We welcome any and all written and graphic work by black lesbians. Our format includes news, reviews, personal perspectives, political commentaries, interviews, poetry, letters, ads, announcements, humor, and journal entries. Fictitious names or pseudonyms are standard literary practice and should be used if the contributing artist fears too much visibility.

The deadlines for the next two issues are January 4th for the February issue and February 3rd for the March issue.

Give us a call if you have an idea that you want to talk about.

Classified Ads

NOTICES

DOWN PAYMENT BOOGIE! for the Women's East Bay Building. Bring your dancing shoes and your check book. Help us celebrate and purchase our new building - Sat. Dec. 18th - 9:00pm. Call 547-4235 for location-info and childcare. Women only. \$7.00

Mothertongue Feminist Readers' Theatre is a women's collective. We write and perform original stories from our lives. We lack the diversity we desire. We want to weave our varied voices/experiences into the revolution of womenkind. We are asking for your input and output. We want to extend a welcome. If you write, act and/or sing join us. Experience is not necessary, we learn as we go. The pay is minimal, depending on the numbers in the audience. The next general meeting is Sunday, December 12, at 20 Cumberland, San Francisco, call Lani Kaahumanu - 285-1086 for further information.

"Turtle Island East" slideshow on women in American Indian countries east of the Mississippi, Dec. 16. With Max Dashu, 8:00 PM, La Pena Community Center, \$3-5 SL

Mothertongue Readers' Theatre brings their latest script - "Did you come or fake it?" Women and Sexuality to the Valencia Rose in San Francisco, Sunday, December 19, 7:30 p.m. Wheelchair accessible, Childcare by reservation call 285-1086 between 10-noon the day of performance, signed for hearing impaired. For further information call 285-1086.

WANTED

"Honey you ought to write that story down!" We want to print your stories, poems, interviews, etc., in the new book ORDINARY WOMEN/EXTRAORDINARY LIVES. Write or call for info: Paula Ross, c/o 1312 Addison St., Berkeley, CA 94702 (415) 848-4850

Artist-Agent wants your work to be shown at Willow - Women's retreat in Napa - Call Coral 526-7975 between 5-9pm.

ARTICLES FOR SALE

The Laughing Goddess Grotto, 4118 Telegraph Ave. Oakland 653-4169 - candles, oils, incenses, gifts, books, asungi cards - art gallery. 4pm-9pm.

PERSONALS

Lesbians Introduction - call Midgett 864-0876.

Happy Birthday Morena - Enjoy

Happy Birthday Ines. I love you - from Ms. P.

MISCELLANEOUS

Visit the West Coast Lesbian Collections, Sundays noon to 4 and Wednesdays 6 to 9 - Call us at 465-8080, or write P.O. Box 23753 Oakland, CA 94623

SERVICES

Houscleaning, reasonable rates - Ann 547-0158

Deadlines for Classified Ads

Jan. 12 for Feb. issue
Feb. 10 for Mar. issue
(415) 540-0671

For classified ads, enclose \$1 per line (\$2 minimum per ad). There are 22 characters per line. Each letter, punctuation mark or space between words counts as a character. We reserve the right to use our discretion in the selection of advertisements.

Name _____ Telephone _____

Address _____

Letter to My Sisters

Sisters,

Because we are Black Lesbians in this world, we are strong. If we have said to any other, "I am a lesbian," we have very special courage. The society does not want us to exist! The only ones asking for a Black Lesbian are other Black Lesbians (and some white wimin). Most would like our strongest statement about our identity to be twisted in a Hefty bag and buried.

The struggle is a hard one. What do you do to get by, to survive, to thrive? What watchwords? Expect a miracle? Press on? The darkest hour is just before dawn. Who encourages you and helps you gain faith?

Share these sources of strength and faith with your sisters through the Black Lesbian Newsletter. We need this in our support system and as an expressive outlet. The society has not and will not promote your voice being heard. We must speak for ourselves. We must validate ourselves.

Anonymous

Subscriptions

I have enclosed \$5 for a one-year subscription (12 issues) to the Black Lesbian Newsletter.

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____
(optional)

Yes, please put me on the mailing list.

Please send subscriptions, ads, correspondence, or donations to:

Black Lesbian Newsletter
1442 Walnut St., #307
Berkeley, CA 94709
(415) 540-0671

We need new members with skills or interest in working with us in the following areas: Writing...Editing...Graphics... Distribution...Outreach...Law...Fundraising...Advertisements...Typing... Bookkeeping. Let's hear from you now! Call us at (415) 540-0671.

help!!

new home,
new phone ...

Please note that BLN has a new mailing address. We can now be reached at:

BLN
1442 A Walnut St. #307
Berkeley, CA 94709

Our answering service number is 540-0671.

halloween party

Let's toot our own horn and pat ourselves on the back for that smashing success, the BLN Halloween party. Without doubt, it was the best party (and fundraiser) of the year--thanks to all of you who attended and thus supported our efforts.

Thanks! Thanks! Thanks! And a very special thank you to Lynn Scott for the use of her house for this event.

apologies

BLN offers apologies to authors and subscribers for any inconvenience suffered due to the BLN address change. Some manuscripts were never received by us due to logistic problems with the post office. We are correcting these problems as they arise. Please bear with us. Thanks.